

Thomas, Norman Watson

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Justice Triumphs In Spain!

A LETTER ABOUT THE
TRIAL OF THE P.O.U.M.

SOCIALIST PARTY OF THE U. S.

549 Randolph Street

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Chicago, Ill.

JUSTICE TRIUMPHS IN SPAIN!

December 15, 1938

Sr. D. Ramón Gonzalez Peña,
Minister of Justice,
Barcelona, Spain.

Dear Comrade Peña:

As you know, the Socialist Party of the United States, through its officers and spokesmen, has on various occasions made representations to the Spanish Republic concerning the fate of those anti-fascist workers in Spain who have been arrested and charged with acts of disloyalty to the Republic. Although feeling no political kinship with the Workers' Party of Marxist Unity (P.O.U.M.), we have been especially concerned with the arrest and trial of members of that Party's Executive Committee. In the same sense, we have recently made inquiries concerning the case of Russell Blackwell who, to the best of our knowledge, is the only American anti-fascist still in jail in Government Spain. It is our understanding that your Ministry is looking into this case and is taking the necessary steps consistent with democratic justice. [Since this letter was written, Blackwell has been released.]

In all this, we have constantly reiterated our belief in and our support of the Loyalist cause. That we

found it necessary to make representations concerning the cases mentioned above was due to our great faith that the denial of ordinary civil liberties to the people could only weaken the Loyalist Government in its battle against the fascist foe, and that no sound government can be built except on the basis of the fullest workers' democracy.

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The P.O.U.M. Trial

WE HAVE therefore been interested in reading reports of the recent trial of seven members of the P.O.U.M. Our information is based primarily on stories which appeared in the press of Government Spain, including *Solidaridad Obrera*, official organ of the National Confederation of Workers in Barcelona.

It is then with a genuine feeling of pleasure that we congratulate the Republic on the administration of justice as expressed in this trial. We especially congratulate it because the trial and its outcome give the lie to the frequently voiced assertion that the Communists are the directing force within Loyalist Spain. No such open and democratic trial could be conducted by the "Red Jesuits" of the labor movement.

For the past eighteen months we have listened skeptically to the Communist cry that the members of the P.O.U.M. were military agents of Fascism, conscious traitors to the Loyalist cause, using their position within the Republic to aid the Fascist forces. It was our instinctive feeling that these members of the P.O.U.M. were, as our comrade Francisco Largo

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Caballero said at the trial, "not Fascists, but extremely intolerant revolutionists."

The conduct of the trial was especially heartening to friends of Loyalist Spain in America, where we remember with horror the war hysteria of 1917-1918 and the lynch madness produced by that hysteria. At the trial the defendants were represented by an able defense attorney; many witnesses, including former and present high government officials, testified as to the character of the defendants. Among these witnesses were our comrades Caballero and Araquistain. We note with especial satisfaction that it was the prosecution itself which recommended the absolution of the defendants from the ridiculous charges of "Fifth Column" espionage.

* * *

For Unity Within Spain

WE LEARN that of the seven defendants on trial, two were acquitted and five were found guilty only of the overt act of participating in the May Days of Barcelona in 1937. We do not pretend here to assign responsibility for those tragic events. Participation therein, freely admitted by the accused, was the only charge that stood the test of Republican justice. It is nevertheless our hope that the Government will understand that amnesty granted to these five prisoners will strengthen the faith of the international labor movement in the cause of Republican Spain.

We feel confident that the trial will mark the definite end of those irregularities in justice that unfortunately occurred during a period of several months of the war. We know that its outcome will do much to strengthen and reinforce the unity so necessary to military victory—a unity which must include all workers' forces in Spain.

We hope that the trial is the first step toward guaranteeing the further unity of Spain by carrying through, in the field of international diplomacy, a policy which bases itself upon the independence and integrity of Spain and upon the international solidarity of the workers of the world.

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"Undying Solidarity"

AT THE National Convention of the Socialist Party of the United States, held in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on April 23, 1938, we passed the following resolution of solidarity with the Loyalist cause, as our guide for work in the United Spain.

"At this time when the embattled workers and farmers of Spain are facing the most critical moments in their heroic struggle for freedom, the Socialist Party of the United States greets them with a pledge of its undying solidarity. The fight which is now being carried on in Spain will live eternally in the annals of working-class history as a beacon light to all future generations of workers in their struggle for emancipation.

"The Spanish fighters have been confronted not only with the combined forces of national and international Fascism but also with the connivance and at times with the overt opposition of the so-called democracies of capitalist Europe and America. This reactionary unity of international capitalism provides concrete proof of the consistent Socialist contention that the only salvation of the Spanish workers lies in the solidarity of the international working class.

"Such solidarity has begun to find expression in the immeasurable valuable role played by the working-class fighters

from all over the world now fighting on behalf of the Spanish workers. Especially do we hail the American comrades now engaged in the fight in Spain. Now more than ever before, it is essential to awaken the workers of the world to their obligations to their Spanish brothers. To this end the Socialist Party of the United States pledges its continued efforts.

* * *

Ultimate Victory

JUST as the unity of the international labor movement is essential outside of Spain, so is the unity of all working-class forces within Spain indispensable to the ultimate victory. Consequently, the Socialist Party acclaims all efforts to achieve that unity within Spain and gives its political support to all forces in Spain working to that goal. Particularly do we greet the Left Socialists of Spain, under the leadership of Comrade Francisco Largo Caballero, for their heroic struggle on behalf of militant Socialism and for working-class unity.

"Since no valid unity in Spain is possible as long as leading anti-fascists are held in the jails of government Spain, the Socialist Party demands once more that all anti-fascists be immediately released from prison so that they may take their places at the front in these crucial days. We condemn the actions of the Communist International and the conservative political elements of Loyalist Spain in denying civil rights to the left forces and intensifying the disunity which has been so harmful to the workers' cause.

"While the capitalist press of the world gleefully proclaims the 'certain' victory of Franco and his fascist allies, the Socialist Party of the United States reaffirms its confidence in the ultimate victory of the

workers and farmers of Spain. The sacrifices of the past 21 months will not be in vain. Long live the unity of the Spanish working-class!"

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Smash The Embargo!

IT IS in line with these sentiments that we are calling for the mobilization of all American Socialists and sympathizers in a drive to force the President and Congress to lift the pernicious embargo which has cost the lives of so many of our comrades on the battlefields of Spain. We shall continue to exert every effort to awaken the American people to provide relief in the form of food and clothing for the heroic Spanish people. We are as one with the workers of Spain in their struggle for freedom from the Fascist pretenders and invaders; we seek their victory because it will be a victory for the international labor movement, for the world forces for peace, democracy and Socialism.

The workers of Spain are doing their job; we shall do ours.

Salud y Victoria!

NORMAN THOMAS

National Chairman of the
Socialist Party, U. S. A.

DEVERE ALLEN

Chairman, Committee for
International Labor Solidarity.

Copies of this pamphlet: \$1.50 per 100. Write Socialist Party, 549 Randolph St., Chicago, Ill., or The Committee for International Labor Solidarity, 348 Third Ave., New York, N. Y.

INTERNATIONAL LABOR SOLIDARITY

SPAIN!

Soldiers at the front go hungry! The women and children in the rear are starving.

But they do not complain. To the Spanish people, the gaunt spectre of hunger is but another of the enemies they fight for freedom—starvation is part of their great sacrifice for victory.

They do not complain. But...

CAN WE REMAIN SILENT?

Upon America's conscience lies the blood of thousands of Spanish heroes, victims of the infamous embargo. Must we add to this the lives of thousands more, dead of starvation?

Spain awaits your answer!

REFUGEES!

Citizens of the world of tomorrow, they have been forced to flee their native land because of political or religious belief.

They can know no peace, no rest as pitiless officials shunt them from city to city, border to border. They are refused the right to a job to provide for their families.

WE MUST HELP THEM!

Let America, founded as a land of refuge, open its borders. Until then, let Americans do their part to provide for rehabilitation of these refugees in other lands.

Exchange your dollars for lives!

CLIP AND MAIL THIS COUPON TODAY

Committee for International Labor Solidarity of the Socialist Party,
348 Third Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Enclosed please find \$.....to be used for

☐ Food for Spain

☐ Political and religious refugees

Name

Address..... City and State.....